A Forward to the Third Edition of
His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi:
A Living Saint for the New Millenium:
Stories of His First Visit to the USA,
by Helena and Roland Olson, Samhita, Fairfield, Iowa,
pp. 281-283.

A FORWARD TO THE THIRD EDITION

By The Rev. Dr. John R. Reigstad

Words of Joy and Peace

You are fortunate to be aware of this book. I remember when I picked up its second edition in 1979. I expected to wade through a dry history that would enrich my doctoral research in the fields of prayer and meditation. Instead, I was carried away by words of sweetness and light. The language was so simple and innocent, moving me with the power of an ocean wave into a realm of love and grace and peace.

The words of Helena Olson embraced me into the spirit of her family and attracted me to the charm of her home on Harvard Boulevard in Los Angeles. From the beginning of her book to the end, I felt as if I were experiencing a new life through her. From her first notice of Maharishi (p. 23), to a tear-filled farewell (pp. 160-166), the reader enters a rare and serene world. Her last page gives a wonderful summary:

> *. . . I knew I could not say anything. There was too much to be thankful for: his presence in our home; the laughter in the rooms; the puzzled looks on his face as he tried to understand us; the comedies and anxieties he shared with us; the chants in the bath; the play with the children and the Siamese cats; the beautiful, flower-filled days; the big, happy family that assembled about him. All this he had brought us, and even more important, the sacred, quiet peace of the soul. (p. 166, Second Edition)*

I found my favorite moments in the book (as you may find yours):

Helena's first encounter with Maharishi (pp. 23-29);

the ripple of laughter when Maharishi says, "Bliss is everywhere. What is needed is only a few minutes morning and evening to go to the treasury, come out and spend in the market place" (p. 37);

when Maharishi gives one of his amazing little insights, referring to necessary work you may not like: "See the job. Do the job. Stay out of the misery" (p. 51);

when Helena and her family settle in at home with Maharishi (pp. 69-80);

when Maharishi explains that "Life is essentially bliss" (pp. 124-134).

Few biographies have touched me with as much joy and emotional sensitivity as Helena's: *The Story of My Life*, by Helen Keller; *Something Beautiful for God: Mother Teresa of Calcutta*, by Malcolm Muggeridge; the Holy Gospels of Jesus Christ. I anticipate that you will come to love Helena's book as much as I do.

The beauty and wisdom of Maharishi's teaching holds a promise of wide range for the Christian community. For those who wish to use Transcendental Meditation as a purely psychological technique, Maharishi preserves the option of a scientific approach so it may be practiced by persons of any religious persuasion. In this regard, TM may be used to lower blood pressure, reduce anxiety, minimize overeating, treat asthma, or lessen dependency on nicotine or alcohol, among other potential benefits.

For scholars who wish to explore the religious implications of TM, rich mines of meaning may be explored in the context of Maharishi's teaching: detailing the methodologies of prayer, coming to the peace of God, experiencing the nature of grace, entering the kingdom of heaven, or engaging a dialogue between the Vedic and Judeo-Christian understandings of divinity.

I invite you to begin reading the charming story of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's first visit to the United States. While not everyone will appreciate every word in precisely the same way, nor would we wish them to, it is my hope that all people everywhere will find something to learn and to love in these words of joy and peace.

The Rev. Dr. John R. Reigstad
On the Occasion of the Visit of Pope John Paul II to St. Louis
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